

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T STATE 124503

FOLLOWING REPEAT KUALA LUMPUR 3323 ACTION STATE INFO BANGKOK
JAKARTA SINGAPORE MANILA TOKYO MAY 28.

QUOTE S E C R E T KUALA LUMPUR 3323

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MY VN

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN TALKS WITH VIETNAMESE AND LAOTIANS

1. DURING HOUR-AN-A-HALF CONVERSATION MORNING OF MAY 28,
FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN TOLD EA DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY
OAKLEY THAT HIS VISIT TO HANOI AND VIENTIANE (MAY 22-26)
HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT THE SRV AND LPDR WANT AND NEED
CONTINUED STABILITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA TO PERMIT THEM TO
RECOVER ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY FROM THE EFFECTS OF
THE WAR AND IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES,
THE U.S., AND OTHER NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES TO CONVINCE
THEM THAT THEY CAN GAIN MORE BY COOPERATING WITH THEIR
NEIGHBORS RATHER THAN BY INTERVENING THROUGH SUPPORT TO
DISSIDENT GROUPS. HE SAID HE WAS HOPEFUL ALTHOUGH NOT
CERTAIN, THAT IF ASEAN AND WESTERN COUNTRIES SHOW PATIENCE
AND A WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST THEM IN REBUILDING THAT THEY
MIGHT ULTIMATELY ACCEPT SOME SORT OF PEACEFUL RELATIONSHIP

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FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA AS A WHOLE.

2. WITH REGARD TO HIS VIEW OF HANOI AND ITS LEADERSHIP,
RITHAUDDEEN NOTED THAT HE FELT THAT PHAM VAN DONG IS A
"LIBERAL" (HIS WORD) BUT THAT IT WOULD TAKE TIME BEFORE HIS
INFLUENCE WOULD COMPLETELY OVERCOME THE OLD-LINE IDEOLOGUES
REPRESENTED BY LE DUC THO. HE THOUGHT THAT THE NATION

AS A WHOLE WOULD RALLY BEHIND PHAM BUT THAT IT WILL REQUIRE TIME AND EFFORT BY THE LATTER TO EXPLAIN HIS POSITION TO THE PEOPLE AND GET THEM TO ACCEPT IT. IN RESPONSE TO OAKLEY'S QUESTION ABOUT HOW SRV MIGHT REACT TO THE USG OFFER TO ESTABLISH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC AND TRADE RELATIONS WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT TO AID, RITHAUDDEEN SAID HE HAD THE IMPRESSION PHAM VAN DONG IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THEIR APPROACH BUT THAT LE DUC THO AND "OTHERS" ARE NOT. HE OFFERED OPINION THAT IT MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME BEFORE PHAM VAN DONG COULD SELL HIS POSITION, BUT HOPED USG WOULD PERSEVERE IN EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH SRV.

3. RITHAUDDEEN SAID THAT BOTH HANOI AND VIENTIANE WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THAILAND, JUST AS THAI SUSPICIOUS OF THEM. SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS VOICED BY HANOI INCLUDED THAI DESIRE SEE ASEAN BECOME A MILITARY ORGANIZATION, THAI-MALAYSIAN MILITARY COOPERATION, THAI TREATMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, AND ALLEGED THAI INTERVENTION IN LAOS. MALAYSIANS DID THEIR BEST TO DISPEL VIETNAMESE SUSPICIONS WITH RESPECT TO THAI-MALAYSIAN COOPERATION AGAINST INSURGENTS. FOREIGN MINISTER HAD EXPLAINED FIRMLY THAT IT WAS AN INTERNAL MATTER WHICH VIETNAMESE HAD NO RIGHT TO ADDRESS. HE DENIED THAT THERE IS ANY INTENTION OF SEATO BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A MILITARY ORGANIZATION. HE URGED THAT VIETNAMESE AND THAI ESTABLISH DIRECT DIALOGUE SO THAT FONMIN COULD BE DIRECTLY REASSURED AS TO THAI PEACEFUL INTENTIONS. FONMIN SAID HE TOOK A SIMILAR LINE WITH LAOTIANS.

4. IN RITHAUDDEEN'S OPINION, LONG-TERM PEACE AND STABILITY
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OF SEASIA REST ON RESOLUTION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIETNAM, LAOS AND THAILAND. CRITICAL FACTORS WILL BE WHETHER HARD-LINE IDEOLOGUES IN LPD AND SRV CAN BE SUBORDINATED TO PRAGMATISTS INTERESTED IN RESOLVING STAGGERING INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF TWO COUNTRIES RATHER THAN SUPPORTING INSURGENCIES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. MALAYSIA WILL DO ITS BEST TO ASSIST AND RITHAUDDEEN HAD STRESSED TO THAI OFFICIALS WHEN HE MET ENROUTE HOME, NEED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ESTABLISH DIALOGUE AND REDUCE SUSPICION AND TENSION WITH LAOS AND VIETNAM. USG SHOULD ASSIST AS BEST IT CAN, ACCORDING TO FONMIN, BUT SHOULD ALSO CONTINUE ITS SECURITY SUPPORT AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO NON-COMMUNIST STATES. THIS IS ESSENTIAL TO EQUILIBRIUM OF SEASIA.

5. OAKLEY TOLD FONMIN THAT USG VIEWS ACCORD WITH THOSE HE HAD JUST EXPRESSED. USG WILL CONTINUE TO WORK ALONG THESE LINES. DILLON UNQUOTE VANCE

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